

UNITED STATES SENATOR • IOWA

CHUCK GRASSLEY

RANKING MEMBER • SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Fr: Jill Gerber, 202/224-6522
Re: President's remarks on welfare re-authorization
Da: Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2003

Sen. Chuck Grassley, incoming chairman of the Committee on Finance, today made the following comment on his intentions for welfare re-authorization and President Bush's remarks on welfare reform.

"I appreciate the President's interest in welfare reform. Using the bully pulpit of the presidency is an effective way to get attention for issues. The Senate's Democratic leadership failed to act on welfare reform in the last Congress. As a result, our nation's safety net program is outdated in some cases. It needs maintenance and improvements, just like any major program that impacts so many people. Many people agree the work requirements need strengthening because work helps put welfare recipients on the road to self-sufficiency. I hope we'll be able to improve upon the work requirements in the bill passed by the Finance Committee in the previous Congress. And child care services are an important complement to strong work requirements. I hope we can come to a consensus on this issue as well.

"I'm in the process of meeting with each member of the Committee one-on-one to talk about each person's priorities, including welfare reform. We won't be able to determine the specific elements of a welfare bill until our committee members have had an opportunity to weigh in. My goal is to enact a bipartisan re-authorization bill early this year, although the timeframe is not specific just yet."